

Chapter Four: Task Force Recommendations

Section One: Task Force Vision, Goals, Findings and Recommendations

CHAPTER FOUR: Task Force Recommendations

After over two and one-half years of public meetings, expert testimony, committee research and study, extensive discussion and debate, and additional public comment and based in large part on its findings described above, the Task Force has developed, through its three committees, a series of major policy recommendations regarding Arizona's transportation system. In addition, the Task Force has identified a number of supporting recommendations. The recommendations have been organized into four major categories. The four major categories are as follows:

Reform and Improve Transportation Planning and Programming Processes

Enhance Transportation System Accountability and Responsiveness

Establish 20-Year Statewide Transportation System "Budget"

Identify and Establish Transportation System Funding Priorities

Reform and Improve Transportation Planning and Programming Processes

Task Force Findings

After reviewing and discussing numerous state, regional, local and tribal transportation plans, the Task Force determined that transportation planning in Arizona is: 1) not performance based; 2) not sufficiently comparable across planning program entities; 3) not sufficiently long-range; 4) not sufficiently multimodal; and 5) not sufficiently integrated with land use planning. In addition, the Task Force finds a lack of any enforceable, regional land use planning mechanism.

On the basis of these findings, the Task Force has developed a series of recommendations intended to reform and improve the transportation planning and programming process in Arizona.

Task Force Recommendations

Major Recommendation One:

REQUIRE PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

All transportation planning and programming organizations within Arizona should be required to utilize performance based planning and programming techniques. The State

Transportation Board should adopt performance based planning and programming processes for

use by all such organizations. All organizations charged with developing transportation priorities within the State should be mandated, by law, to use the adopted processes.

ADOT should be responsible for developing, after consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, the proposed performance-based planning and programming processes for presentation to the State Transportation Board.

The performance-based processes should be periodically reviewed and updated as conditions and system requirements change. These processes should incorporate all modes of transportation and the transportation needs of all regions and all jurisdictions within the state. In addition, the processes should recognize and incorporate all publicly funded organizations involved in the provision of transportation services.

Under performance based planning and programming, specific proposed transportation system projects are evaluated on the basis of the effect the proposed project will have on the transportation of people and goods. The focus of the evaluation is outcome based – how many

additional people or how much additional freight will be transported from origin to destination, or how much faster, or safer. The evaluation is not focused on inputs or system characteristics – how many additional lane miles, or buses.

Proper, outcome-based measurement of the performance of any transportation project as well the overall transportation system is essential to the success of a performance based planning and programming system. Appropriate outcome-based measures will facilitate the comparison and evaluation of proposed projects across transportation modes. Consequently, performance based planning and programming encourages and supports multimodal system planning, design and development.

The performance-based processes should include:

- Uniform performance measurements for all modes and regions of the system, while recognizing local and regional differences in performance expectations and standards;
- Routine collection and reporting of comprehensive, verifiable data;
- Systematic forecasts of the anticipated performance outcomes of proposed expenditures; and
- Systematic periodic reporting and certification of system performance.

The performance data must measure the delivery of transportation services (the movement of goods and people) and the extent to which the statewide transportation system is performing. The goal of the measurements should be to determine the extent to which the system is moving people and goods in relation to the cost of doing so.

For a proposed project to be included in a transportation plan or program, the basic transportation need to be met by the project must be identified along with the specific measurable system performance improvement that will occur if the project is undertaken. The expected system performance improvement must be established using the adopted system performance measures.

Consistent, minimum statewide standards should be established, and the performance of the

system should be measured and periodically reported relative to those standards. The standards should recognize regional, geographic and demographic differences. The standards and performance measures, to the extent possible, should be applicable across transportation modes although some may focus on a single mode as appropriate. Adequate funding and personnel should be budgeted to cover the cost of developing and supporting the evolution of the planning and programming process improvements.

The roles and responsibilities of all participants in the transportation system (including state government, local governments, tribal governments and regional planning entities) should be clearly delineated, integrated and more effectively coordinated. Planning, programming, and reporting processes must be integrated to ensure a sustainable and reliable system.

Implementation Requirements:

The use of approved performance based planning and programming processes, by all transportation organizations in Arizona, should be required by state law and should be a condition of receipt of state shared transportation revenues. In the case of multi-jurisdictional planning entities, this requirement should be imposed on all member organizations. Adequate funding to cover the costs of these improvements should be appropriated by the Legislature.

Supporting Recommendations

In support of the development and implementation of performance based planning and programming, the Task Force also recommends the following planning related improvements.

Establish Transportation System Performance Measures

To facilitate performance based planning and programming, the State Transportation Board should adopt and direct the development of key transportation system performance measures. These measures should be used to: 1) guide the

development of the transportation policy statement, the long-range plan and the selection of transportation projects for the six-year transportation program; 2) serve as the basis for monitoring and reporting on the performance of the state's transportation system; and 3) serve as the basis for allocating state, regional and federal financial resources among major transportation program categories.

The adopted transportation performance measures should be utilized by all state, regional, tribal, and local transportation agencies for both planning and programming decisions. It is important that the measures, to the greatest extent possible, are applicable across transportation modes, although in some limited instances they may focus on a single mode as appropriate. In conjunction with the adopted performance measures, the State Transportation Board should adopt standardized system performance data collection and reporting requirements for use by all state, regional, and local transportation agencies as described below.

ADOT, after consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, should develop and use detailed criteria designed to meet the State Transportation Board's approved performance measures in identifying projects for the Six-Year Program. The project selection process should also conform to state and regional growth policies.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of transportation system performance measures by the State Transportation Board and implementation of their use by all transportation organizations in Arizona, should be required by state law and should be a condition of receipt of state shared transportation revenues. In the case of multi-jurisdictional planning entities, this requirement should be imposed on all member organizations.

Establish Regional Transportation Planning Policies

To facilitate performance based planning, the State Transportation Board should adopt policies and procedures to regulate the approval of specific transportation projects at the regional level. ADOT should develop, after consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, the recommended policies and procedures. The purpose of the policies and procedures should be to ensure all regions are using the same procedures and are using performance based techniques. Such procedures should ensure that any regional project approval processes are conducted in accordance with federal and State Transportation Board policies, procedures and requirements.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of regional transportation planning policies by the State Transportation Board and implementation of their use by all regional transportation organizations in Arizona, should be required by state law and should be a condition of receipt of state shared transportation revenues by member organizations.

Expand Multimodal Planning

As part of the implementation of performance based planning and programming, ADOT, and all transportation agencies within the State, should continue to expand their involvement into all modes of transportation. Attention should focus on the integration of the various modes to facilitate multimodal mobility of both people and goods. The strengths, weaknesses and interrelationships of each mode should be recognized and the transportation planning processes should work to optimize each mode's strengths and minimize inter-modal conflicts.

The planning process must incorporate a clear recognition that an effective transportation system moves people and products from their original location to their ultimate destination in a timely and efficient manner. The planning process and information collected should include data regarding private transportation providers, such as trucking lines, airlines, railroads, private

transit providers and freight delivery services. The processes should also incorporate input from public safety professionals regarding system design and operations.

Implementation Requirements:

The expansion of multimodal planning by ADOT should be mandated by Executive Order of the Governor.

Improve Aviation Planning

The proper planning and management of aviation services, as an integrated part of the overall transportation system within the State, must recognize the importance of the common airspace, land use decisions adjacent to airports and in major air corridors, effective inter-modal connections for both people and goods, and facility requirements. Although airspace management is largely under the control of federal agencies, state, regional and local transportation planning must recognize and address airspace capacity and utilization issues. Additionally, the system performance measures for the aviation system must recognize the unique nature of aviation. Aviation planning must recognize the importance of airports as regional economic drivers and must incorporate inter-modal ground connections.

The Task Force recognizes the ongoing work of the State Aviation Needs Study, but believes that an objective, comprehensive study of Arizona's future aviation system needs, as an integral part the State's transportation system, should be undertaken. The comprehensive study must examine, at a minimum, airspace capacity and utilization, land use compatibility, inter-modal connections and aviation facility requirements.

The Governor should establish, by Executive Order, an Advisory Committee on Aviation. The Committee should develop and report to the Governor on a comprehensive statewide strategy to define and address aviation needs. The Committee shall specifically address airspace utilization and capacity, environmental issues, land use compatibility, connectivity to surface transportation, facility utilization, federal government aviation spending in Arizona, and federal government programs. The Committee

should report within one year of the effective date of the Executive Order.

The Committee should be composed of not more than nine persons, all of whom have experience and expertise in aviation. In their capacity as committee members, individuals should not advocate for or represent any special or corporate interest. However, the Committee should be required, during the course of its deliberations, to take testimony from all aviation interests including corporations, aviation businesses, the military, special interest groups and citizens.

The Aviation Advisory Committee to the Governor should establish a dialogue with federal agencies and should be charged with this specific responsibility. This initial dialogue could provide the template for a permanent liaison between Arizona and federal agencies.

State and local transportation agencies should establish dialogue with federal agencies concerning aviation issues in Arizona. Given that various federal agencies and the United States Congress have the authority to control airspace, establish laws and regulations, and appropriate funds, which have a decisive impact on aviation interests, it is essential that Arizona establish a substantive, ongoing dialogue with appropriate entities in the federal government. Without strong working relations with the federal government, Arizona cannot successfully deal with aviation issues.

The State should examine an essential regional air service program to encourage regular commercial air service to the major regional airports outside the two large urban counties. The Governor's Advisory Committee on Aviation should examine the program.

Implementation Requirements:

The Aviation Advisory Committee should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor.

Increase Support for State and Local Transportation Planning

In recognition of the increased responsibilities associated with performance based planning and programming, specific revenues should be dedicated to funding expanded and improved multimodal performance based transportation planning and programming by state, regional and tribal transportation agencies. Using a portion of these monies, ADOT should expand its support for regional and tribal transportation planning activities. ADOT's budget should be increased to provide this additional support in the form of direct planning and technical assistance as well as planning grants.

This assistance should include such activities as operating a shared Geographic Information System database, transportation modeling assistance, and forecasting assistance.

Current transportation planning within the State is insufficient, largely due to inadequate funding.

Implementation Requirements:

The expansion of transportation planning support and technical assistance by ADOT should be initially mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. Adequate funding should be appropriated by the Legislature.

Incorporate Consideration of Regional Transportation Impacts

All future transportation studies conducted by state, regional, local or tribal transportation planning organizations should consider and address any impacts the proposed project(s) will have on the surrounding regional transportation system.

Implementation Requirements:

The consideration of regional transportation impacts in state funded studies should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and should be required by state law for all transportation organizations in Arizona.

Major Recommendation Two:

DEVELOP AND ADOPT A LONG-RANGE, STATEWIDE, MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

State law should require the State Transportation Board to adopt a Long-Range (minimum of twenty years), Statewide, Multimodal Transportation Plan. ADOT should develop the Plan, under the State Transportation Board's direction, utilizing performance based planning techniques. The Long-Range Plan should incorporate the needs of all modes of transportation, and all regions and all jurisdictions within the state. It should consider any information developed as a result of federally mandated planning processes.

The Long-Range Plan developed through this process should facilitate Arizona's future, rather than direct it. It should be recognized as a statement of the State's anticipated requirements at the time of its adoption. The Long-Range Plan should also be seen as a part of the ongoing, evolutionary planning process. It should be structured to meet the anticipated transportation needs of the State and should include the anticipated costs of implementation. The Long-Range Plan should delineate the anticipated performance outcomes associated with its various components using the Board adopted system performance measures. The Long-Range Plan and the anticipated performance outcomes should be established to ensure the most effective use of scarce transportation resources.

While the Long-Range Plan should not be fiscally constrained by projected existing revenues at the time of adoption, it should specifically identify the portion that can be funded with projected existing revenues and the differences in the expected transportation system outcomes at different funding and expenditure levels. The expected outcomes should be expressed using the same performance measures used in the performance based planning and programming processes. In addition, the final plan should include specific projects and uses of the projected available revenues.

Specific projects included in short-term programs must have been identified and prioritized in the Long-Range Plan. Any projects and priorities that were not established using the performance-based processes should not be included in the Plan.

The development of the Long-Range Plan should be in addition to any federally mandated planning requirements.

The Long-Range Plan should be updated annually with a major review every five years and should include greater specificity regarding near term activities and general direction for more distant periods. The five-year updates should incorporate a "vision" of Arizona's future and work to develop a transportation system to meet the State's future needs.

The initial Long-Range Plan should be completed by January 2004, and should incorporate the findings, recommendations and priorities identified by the Task Force.

An oversight panel composed of knowledgeable private citizens with an interest in improving the State's transportation system should direct the development of the Long-Range Plan and oversee its subsequent implementation.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of the long-range plan by the State Transportation Board should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. The Executive Order and statutes should specify the initial completion date and a schedule for subsequent reviews and updates. The citizen oversight panel (selected to oversee and direct the planning and conduct of the statewide transportation plan) should be appointed by Executive Order.

Supporting Recommendations

In support of the development and implementation of the statewide transportation policy statement and the long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan, the Task Force

also recommends the following supporting improvements.

Develop A Statewide Transportation Policy Statement

State Transportation Board should be required, by law, to develop and adopt multimodal transportation policies to be known as the Statewide Transportation Policy Statement. The purpose of the Policy Statement should be to assure the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, modally integrated and balanced statewide transportation system. The Policy Statement should be developed utilizing performance based planning techniques. In developing the Policy Statement, the State Transportation Board should consider and, to the greatest extent practicable, incorporate the transportation goals and policies of local and regional transportation agencies in developing these policies. The Policy Statement should be updated every two years.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of the statewide transportation policy statement by the State Transportation Board should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. The Executive Order and statutes should specify the initial completion date and a schedule for subsequent reviews and updates.

Develop a Multimodal, Six-year Transportation Program

State law should require the State Transportation Board to adopt a Multimodal, Six-Year Transportation Program for the state transportation system. The timing of the six-year program should correspond with the federal funding authorization cycle. ADOT should develop the Program, under the State Transportation Board's direction, utilizing performance based planning techniques. The Program should reflect short-term implementation of the state portion of the Board's Long-Range Plan and should incorporate all modes of transportation, recognize the transportation needs of all regions and consider

any information developed as a result of federally mandated planning processes.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of the six-year transportation program by the State Transportation Board should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law.

Establish Comprehensive Standardized Data Collection and Reporting

After consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, ADOT should develop and the State Transportation Board should adopt transportation data collection and reporting standards and methodologies. The reporting standards should cover: system characteristic data; traffic and system utilization data; system performance data utilizing the system performance measures adopted by the Board; estimated project costs; revenue data; future projections and correction of prior errors. ADOT should collect and annually report the standardized transportation data covering all aspects of the statewide transportation system. As much data as possible should be incorporated into a geographical database.

All transportation agencies within the State should be required, by law, to use the adopted standards and methodologies and to report annually required data to ADOT. Tribal transportation agencies should be encouraged to participate in the data reporting process.

As a part of the data collection process, the system performance improvements attributable to recently completed projects should be specifically documented and compared to the expected system performance improvements identified in the planning and programming processes.

Any local transportation agency failing to use the adopted standards and methodologies and reporting requirements should be ineligible to receive any transportation revenue distributions. In recognition of the costs associated with these requirements a portion of any incremental revenues should be allocated and utilized for these purposes.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and adoption of comprehensive data collection and reporting requirements should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. The Executive Order and statutes should specify the implementation schedule and adequate funding should be appropriated by the Legislature.

Develop Transportation System Needs Estimates

Based on the standardized data collection and reporting, the State Transportation Board should continually maintain an estimate of the 20-year needs of the state-owned transportation systems and those other systems of interest to the statewide system. The Long-Range Plan, as updated, should serve as the basis for the estimated needs.

All cities, counties and other transportation agencies receiving State or federal transportation funds should be required to develop a similar estimate of their 20-year transportation needs and report those needs to the State Transportation Board. The State Transportation Board should adopt standards for the contents and complexity of the local transportation needs reports. These standards should recognize the differences in local circumstances. As appropriate, local transportation agencies may rely on the planning activities and reports of regional planning agencies to meet these requirements.

The State Transportation Board should prepare a biennial report of state and local transportation needs, in those years in which a state operating budget is not adopted.

Implementation Requirements:

The development and maintenance of transportation system needs estimates should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. The Executive Order and statutes should specify completion dates. Adequate funding should be appropriated by the Legislature.

Expand and Improve Working Relations with Indian Tribes

Examine Legal Constraints

ADOT and the tribes should continue to meet and identify ways to resolve disputes that may arise between the tribes and ADOT on highway projects through contracts or intergovernmental agreements. Solutions should be developed in a manner that could be applicable to other state programs.

Increase Assistance

ADOT should initiate technical and planning assistance to tribes. The ADOT director should hire or assign sufficient planning staff to assist tribes with various activities, such as technical training, transportation studies, data compilation and transportation plans. The ADOT director should carefully consider the actual location of these ADOT planners in relationship to tribal communities.

Permit Direct Application

State law should be amended to provide tribes the option of applying directly for state LTAF II (transit assistance grant program). It is also recommended that tribes be allowed to use LTAF II to start up new transit services. ADOT regional planners could assist the tribes in applying for LTAF II grants and improve coordination of local or regional transit systems that may provide vital transit service for many tribal members.

Encourage Joint Funding

ADOT, municipalities, counties and tribes should be encouraged to jointly fund transportation improvement projects and maintenance services on regionally significant roads located within tribal lands. ADOT's Transportation Planning Division as well as ADOT's district engineers could assist the tribes in identifying these regionally significant roads. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona should work with ADOT staff to develop acceptable guidelines for determining what constitutes 'regionally significant' roads on

tribal lands which may be eligible for funding from a non-HURF revenue source.

Improve Communications

ADOT needs to establish a formal communication and consultation policy with tribes, when state highway projects involve and impact tribal lands. ADOT is currently changing its "consultation" policies to ensure proper consultation with tribes on ADOT projects that may impact tribal communities or tribal land. For example, this communication and consultation would include sharing information about available resources and funding related to transportation and the coordination of activities and notification to tribes on all planned projects impacting tribal lands/roads.

Major Recommendation Three:

COORDINATE LAND USE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

State, regional and local planning entities must increase coordination of their long-range, land use plans and their long-range transportation plans.

Local land use plans must consider state and regional transportation plans, especially with respect to future transportation system corridors. In turn, state and regional transportation plans should recognize local land use plans. Where appropriate, these plans should also incorporate air quality measures.

The coordination and consideration of the overlaying transportation system plans and land use plans by all affected jurisdictions will increase the usefulness and benefits of those plans and will help avoid unintended conflicts in the future.

A regional transportation improvement plan (TIP) should not be moved forward without demonstrated coordination with local and regional land use policies.

Planning for all future major transportation projects should include utility corridors adjacent

to transportation corridors. However, any incremental costs of the utility corridors should be borne by the users of the utility corridors.

Cities, towns and counties should be required to notify ADOT and regional transportation planning authorities of any proposed, major amendments to their land use plans. Specifically, sections 9-461.06 A.R.S. and 11-824 A.R.S. should be amended to require such notice.

Within a reasonable period, integrated regional plans, including both land use and transportation components, should be required by state law. These plans may consider other related issues, such as air quality, as appropriate. The regional plans should recognize and address regional needs and requirements rather than merely assemble local needs and requirements.

Implementation Requirements:

State law should require increased coordination of land use plans and transportation plans. State, regional and local governments should be given a finite period to implement the integration of these plans.

Supporting Recommendations

In support of better coordination of land use planning and transportation planning, the Task Force also recommends the following supporting improvements.

Reduce Commuter Travel Demand through Improved Land Use Planning

Commuter travel demand, especially in the growing urban areas, could effectively be reduced by encouraging land use development patterns that balance nearby employment centers and residential developments. To maximize the effect, the employment opportunities developed within a local area should reflect, to the greatest extent possible, the employment choices of nearby residents.

Implementation Requirements:

Planning and zoning policies that require "employment balanced" residential development should be thoroughly studied, with special attention to their beneficial effect on regional transportation requirements. If determined to reduce commuter traffic demand, these development requirements should be encouraged by incentives or mandated by local ordinance, or by state law.

Evaluate Major Development Projects

There should be public disclosure of the expected impacts of major public and private land use activities (including either commercial or residential development) on the expected performance of the transportation system. Local government should be required to notify ADOT of large proposed land use changes. ADOT should develop and the State Transportation Board should adopt definitions for "major projects".

Under the direction of ADOT, a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the proposed change on the statewide and regional components of the transportation system should be conducted. The evaluation should consider the impact of the change on both local transportation patterns and regional through traffic. If the impact is initially determined to be potentially significant, the local agency responsible for approving the change should be responsible for funding a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the proposed change on the future performance of the transportation system. The evaluation should be conducted under the direction of ADOT or the regional transportation district, as appropriate.

Based on the comprehensive evaluation, the local approving agency should be responsible for developing any transportation system improvements necessary to mitigate the expected impacts of the proposed change utilizing either its own monies or monies derived from the proposed development. If the approving agency fails to effectively mitigate the expected impacts, ADOT or the regional transportation district, as appropriate, with the approval of the State Transportation Board,

should undertake the required improvements and withhold sufficient state shared transportation revenues to cover the costs of the improvements.

A statutory structure for the imposition of transportation system development fees should be enacted to provide an equitable source of funding for these required transportation system improvements.

Implementation Requirements:

State law should require the agency responsible for approving all major, new development projects to finance any required mitigation to offset the increased burden created by the development on the state and regional transportation systems utilizing either its own monies or monies derived from the proposed development. State law should authorize a development fee structure that could be used for these purposes.

Identify and Preserve Future Transportation Corridors

ADOT and other transportation agencies throughout the State in their long-range planning processes, should identify future transportation corridors for preservation. State laws concerning corridor identification and advance acquisition should be modified to facilitate this practice.

The authority of ADOT and other transportation agencies throughout the State, to acquire future right-of-way should be expanded and extended beyond ten years to any corridor identified in the 20-year planning process. The process for disposition of unneeded land should be improved. At least \$10 million per year should be dedicated for the acquisition of future transportation corridors.

Local zoning and land use plans should recognize and preserve regional and statewide transportation corridors. Both existing and future right-of-way requirements should be incorporated into local plans and zoning, to avoid later, expensive right-of-way purchases.

ADOT should continue to use existing programs, including the federal "rails to trails" program, the federal "land banking" program, land exchanges, and other programs, to preserve rail rights-of-way, which would otherwise be abandoned, for future transportation purposes. The Arizona Legislature should enact legislation that would establish a lower property tax classification for rail rights of way that are not currently needed for service, but that are preserved for future transportation purposes.

Implementation Requirements:

Specific process improvements necessary to identify and preserve critical state transportation corridors should be mandated by Executive Order of the Governor. Existing state statutory impediments to advance acquisition should be repealed. State law should require local transportation agencies to identify and preserve key current and future regional transportation corridors. The reduced property tax classification for abandoned rail rights-of-way should be enacted. Adequate funding for the acquisition of critical future transportation corridors should be appropriated by the legislature.

Other Planning Related Recommendations

In addition to the major planning related recommendations described above, the Task Force also recommends the following improvements to the transportation planning processes within the State.

Regional Notification of General Plan Amendments

As a part of the adoption or amendment of a general plan, in addition to all existing notices, cities and counties should be required, by law, to notify all potentially effected cities and counties of any proposed action that could effect their local transportation system or the transportation system within the regional area.

Control Access Along New State Roads

The State should establish strict access control standards on all future roadway development projects. In particular, access along rural community bypasses (and other new routes) should be protected from gradual land use changes that increase local traffic and entering and exiting traffic.

Periodically Review State Transportation Laws and Processes

The Legislature should periodically review the State's transportation statutes and the transportation system's operational framework. The review should provide clear policy guidance and should recognize and incorporate changing federal laws and rules. Only limited statutory changes should be made between the periodic reviews to facilitate a stable planning and operating environment.

Periodically Review New Technologies

ADOT, as a part of its long-range planning, should periodically re-examine new technologies that are technically feasible, but which may not be financially feasible, such as high-speed rail systems, intercity rail lines, etc. This re-examination should include the privatization opportunities and the use of public private partnerships.

Expand State Multimodal Support

The current transportation funding structure, which includes specific modal restrictions,

interferes with the development of an optimally responsive transportation system. Consequently, future funding should move toward greater flexibility in funding the overall transportation system.

State funding support of local transit services should be expanded and funded by permanent, reliable revenues. State assistance for transit, in the larger urban areas, should be focused on intra-regional, inter-city express transit systems designed to meet commuter needs and reduce congestion. Additional emphasis should be placed on travel reduction programs and incentives.

The Local Transportation Assistance Fund II program, or its successor, should be reviewed to provide greater funding flexibility among local jurisdictions to deliver transit services, especially in less densely populated areas. Specifically, funding should be doubled to \$30 million per year on an ongoing basis. In addition, the expanded program should include coordination of all transit funding sources, such as K-12 bus passes, AHCCCS transportation subsidies, DES programs and others.

State assistance for transit, in the larger urban areas, should be focused on intra-regional, inter-city express transit systems designed to meet commuter needs and reduce congestion.

Implementation Requirements:

The appropriate state statutes should be amended to authorize the recommendations described above.

Enhance Transportation System Accountability and Responsiveness

Task Force Findings

After reviewing and discussing various aspects of Arizona transportation system, including the roles and responsibilities of the numerous state, regional, local and tribal transportation organizations, the Task Force determined that:

- 1) stronger comprehensive financial

management is needed to increase public confidence in the system; 2) the existing regional planning organizations have failed to adequately address regional transportation needs and that this failure is largely due to their essential structure, lack of enforcement authority and lack of implementation powers; and 3) the State Transportation Board should be strengthened.

On the basis of these findings the Task Force has developed a series of recommendations intended to increase the accountability and responsiveness of the agencies and organizations responsible for Arizona's transportation system.

Task Force Recommendations

Major Recommendation Four:

ESTABLISH COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

ADOT should be required to establish a comprehensive financial management system encompassing all aspects of the state transportation system. The comprehensive system should include separate certifications of future, estimated revenues and future estimated system costs as reflected in the statewide 20-year transportation plan. All transportation revenues (federal, state and local/regional) received by all state agencies should be included in the certification. All state transportation costs should be included in the certification of anticipated costs including: optimal long-term system preservation costs; system maintenance and administration costs; and system expansion costs. Adequate funding and personnel should be included in ADOT's budget to cover the costs of these responsibilities.

All state and local agencies should be statutorily mandated to assist ADOT in preparing the certifications and tribal governments should be encouraged to participate. The certification should be completed every two years. The current "life-cycle" management process used by ADOT in connection with the Maricopa Regional Freeway System, which is a proven financial management tool, can serve as an initial model for the statewide system.

Implementation Requirements:

Expanded comprehensive financial management of all state transportation programs should be immediately mandated by Executive Order of the Governor and required by state law. Local agencies should be required by law to cooperate in the certification process.

Supporting Recommendation

In support of the development and implementation of comprehensive financial management, the Task Force also recommends the following activities.

Audit the Uses of Dedicated Transportation Monies

The Auditor General should conduct a biennial, financial compliance audit of the state, city and county uses of HURF distributions; LTAF monies and other dedicated transportation revenues to ensure these monies are used solely for permitted transportation purposes. The results of the audit should be reported State Transportation Board.

Implementation Requirements:

State law should require biennial audits of the use of all state shared transportation revenues by, or under the direction of, the State Auditor General.

Major Recommendation Five:

ESTABLISH URBAN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE DISTRICTS

Overview

Regional Transportation and Land Use Districts should be established in the large urban areas to address regional, multimodal transportation requirements, land use compatibility and other regional impacts of development. The Districts should be responsible for developing, implementing and operating multimodal transportation systems to meet regional transportation needs. The Districts should enable the large urban areas to: 1) improve and maintain regionally significant transportation systems and services; 2) ensure broad, regional land use compatibility; and 3) address the regional impacts of development through the establishment of districts that are not bound to or limited by existing county or incorporated city boundaries.

State Establishment of Regional Transportation and Land Use Districts

Regional Transportation and Land Use Districts should be authorized in state law, which would provide legal basis for their creation and operations. In accordance with the state statutes, a Regional Transportation and Land Use District (hereafter the "District") could be established in any urban area in the state.

District Boundaries

The boundaries of a District should encompass the expected 20-year transportation planning area and should include all portions of a geographically integrated transportation region. Districts should be established in an integrated transportation region that can be identified using employment commuting patterns, commercial development patterns and other transportation system indicators. The State Transportation Board should verify the established boundaries of each District. The boundaries of each District should be periodically reviewed, at least every ten years, and adjusted to reflect changing transportation patterns.

District Governing Board

The District Governing Board would be elected and would be composed of five members serving staggered four-year terms. Members should not serve more than two full terms. The District Governing Board should have overall financial, operational and legal responsibility for the District.

Independent District Staff

The District would have an independent professional staff responsible for: 1) planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining regionally significant intraregional transportation facilities within the District; 2) developing regional land use plans; and 3) analyzing the regional impacts of development. The District may utilize the services or personnel of other political subdivisions through intergovernmental agreement or hire its own staff.

District's Long Range Transportation Plan

The District Governing Board should approve a six-year intermodal transportation program (consistent with the federal funding cycle) and 20-year intermodal transportation plan for the District's transportation facilities. All District plans and programs should be developed in accordance with the State adopted procedures and should incorporate State adopted performance based planning methods.

The District's plans and programs should include regional roadway, aviation, freight rail, passenger rail, bicycle and pedestrian and public transit services. The plans and programs should identify programs and services to be accomplished in twenty years with the existing revenue stream. The District's plan should recognize and incorporate the inter-regional facilities identified in the State's Long-Range Plan.

The 20-year plan should be updated annually, with a major review every five years. The six-year program should be updated annually and should coincide with the federal funding cycle.

The 20-year plan and the six-year program should conform to the state prescribed regional planning processes.

District's Responsibilities for Regional Transportation Facilities

The District should have all planning, programming, development, operational and maintenance responsibility for regionally significant transportation facilities including:

- Intra-Regional transportation systems and facilities of regional significance (e.g. regional roadways, regional express bus service, and other regional transportation facilities and services)
- Inter-city, intra-regional transit services

The District Board should determine, after consultation with local and state transportation agencies, the facilities and systems within its region for which it will be responsible. In

instances of dispute over responsibility for specific facilities, the State Transportation Board should, by resolution, assign responsibilities for the disputed facilities.

The District should be subject to and recognize and incorporate all existing federal planning requirements, such as air quality conformance, in its planning and operating practices. The District should interact with existing, federally established planning agencies in the same manner as counties and cities.

The District, in cooperation with local governments and regional transportation planning agencies, should develop and adopt a needs analysis including system cost and available revenues and report the outcome of these studies to ADOT and the State Transportation Board. The needs analysis should use the state adopted standards and performance measures.

The District should be authorized to enter into intergovernmental agreements with existing transportation agencies to complete any of its duties and responsibilities.

Resolution of Conflicts Among Districts by State Transportation Board

To the extent that transportation plans of adjacent Districts conflict, the State Transportation Department should mediate the areas of conflict and the State Transportation Board should adopt the controlling resolution.

District's Long Range Land Use Plan

The District Governing Board should approve a long range regional land use plan that ensures regional land use compatibility. The plan should also incorporate the right-of-way needs of the District's long range transportation plan and address other regional impacts of development. The long range regional land use plan should be updated annually, with a major review every five years.

Taxing Authority

The Districts should be empowered, by a vote of the governing board, to levy and collect sales taxes, and transportation development fees to fund their operations as prescribed by state statute. The District sales tax would be computed using the state transaction privilege tax base and levied at a fixed percentage of the state rate. The power to authorize taxes should be delayed for two years following the creation of the District. The District Board may submit any tax or fee proposal for voter approval.

The Districts should also receive a share of any incremental transportation related revenues collected by the State for intra-regional routes of regional significance. The Districts should be authorized to issue transportation bonds secured by local and state-shared revenues. The Districts should consider all available funding solutions, not just additional taxes.

Interim Organization

In recognition of the difficulties associated with the establishment of regional transportation and land use districts, the Task Force recommends that when authorizing the Districts, the Legislature consider using existing county boundaries as the interim boundaries of the Districts and the County Board of Supervisors as an Interim Board for the District. These interim provisions should be limited to an organization period for the Districts, not to exceed five years.

Implementation Requirements:

State implementing statutes should be enacted to authorize the establishment of the urban Regional Transportation and Land Use Districts.

Major Recommendation Six:

STRENGTHEN THE ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Board Membership

The Arizona State Transportation Board should be increased to nine members. The members would no longer represent specific geographic "districts", but would represent the State as a whole. The following restrictions would be imposed on appointments to the State Transportation Board:

- A. Three members should be appointed from each county with a population greater than one-third of the state's population, according to the most recent decennial census;
- B. One member should be appointed from each county with a population greater than 500,000, according to the most recent decennial census, provided such county is not included in paragraph A;
- C. Five members should be appointed from the remainder of the state not included in paragraph A or B, but no more than one member may be appointed from any one county; and
- D. State Transportation Board members may not serve in elected positions.

The State Transportation Board members should serve 6-year terms. Two members should be appointed every other year and one member appointed on alternative years. The members should annually elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman must be rotated annually and at least every third year, it should be a member from counties greater than one-third of the state's population.

In appointing members of the State Transportation Board, the Governor shall consider individuals with a wide variety of relevant knowledge and experience, including knowledge of roadways, mass transit services, aviation systems, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and local, regional, statewide, and tribal transportation issues.

State Transportation Board Staffing

The State Transportation Board should be provided, by law, adequate, separate staff (from ADOT) to evaluate the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Policy Statement, the Six-year Program and the system performance measures. The State Transportation Board should have the authority to hire and fire its own staff.

Clarify State Responsibility for Interregional Routes and Facilities

ADOT, under the direction of the State Transportation Board, should have all planning, programming, development and maintenance responsibility for the following transportation systems:

- Interstate highways (e.g. I-8, I-10, I-15, I-17, I-19, I-40)
- Inter-regional highways (e.g. SR 85, SR 169, SR 87)
- Intra-regional highways of statewide significance (e.g. Maricopa Freeways, US 60, SR 210 – Aviation Parkway)
- Routes serving National and State Parks
- Inter-regional transit services
- State Aviation Fund projects

Implementation Requirements:

State law regarding the Board structure and responsibilities should be amended to reflect the seven year term and the independent staff. Sufficient monies should be appropriated by the legislature to fund the additional personnel and responsibilities.

Supporting Recommendation

In support of the expansion and strengthening of the State Transportation Board, the Task Force also recommends the following.

ADOT Support of the State Transportation Board

ADOT should assist the State Transportation Board by:

Developing the Transportation Policy Statement, the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the transportation needs analysis;
 Developing transportation performance measures and the annual performance reporting of the states transportation systems; and
 Identifying transportation projects to be included in the Six-Year Transportation Program,

based on the policies and analyses listed above.

Implementation Requirements:

State law prescribing the duties and responsibilities of ADOT should be clarified.

Establish 20-Year Statewide Transportation System “Budget”

Task Force Findings

After initially reviewing a variety of existing transportation plans and studies, the Task Force determined that no existing information adequately documented the State’s long-range transportation needs. In its Interim Report to the Governor in December of 1999, the Task Force recognized that it was “unable... to specifically quantify the shortfall due to the differences in methodologies among the various existing transportation needs studies...”.

Consequently, the Task Force, through its Needs Consultant Booz-Allen & Hamilton, systematically collected and reviewed all existing state, regional, local and tribal transportation plans and studies. The information from these plans was standardized, normalized, and loaded into a non-duplicative database and extrapolated to 20-year costs.

On the basis of their identified priorities, the Task Force, through its Analytical Consultant Booz-Allen Hamilton, estimated the overall, statewide 20-year transportation needs to be approximately \$61 billion, in year 2000 constant dollars.

Simultaneously, the Task Force, through its Revenue Consultant Wilbur Smith Associates, developed an estimate of existing transportation revenues for the coming twenty years of approximately \$41 billion, in year 2000 constant dollars.

On the basis of these finding and their identified priorities, the Task Force, through its Revenue

Consultant, developed the following recommendations.

Task Force Recommendations

Major Recommendation Seven:

INCREASE DEDICATED TRANSPORTATION REVENUES

Dedicated transportation revenues should be increased gradually over the next twenty years by approximately \$20 billion, in year 2000 constant dollars, to meet the expected needs of Arizona’s multimodal, statewide transportation system. A series of gradual tax rate increases should be implemented throughout the 20-year period to meet the estimated needs.

In recognition of the uncertain schedule for implementation of these recommendations each recommended adjustment has been scheduled within the 20-year period.

The new transportation system revenues should emphasize flexibility to permit the allocation of revenues to the transportation system improvements identified through the performance based planning and programming processes described above.

The funding sources for transportation need to expand beyond the dedicated revenues of the Highway User Revenue Fund, the largest component of which is fuel taxes. Not only are these monies constitutionally restricted to street, highway and bridge purposes, the effective revenue generating power of the fuel tax

continues to be eroded by conversions to alternative fuels and the increasing fuel efficiency of the general vehicle fleet.

In recognition of the need for greater flexibility in funding all modes of transportation, the recommended revenues rely heavily on non-restricted revenue sources.

Increase Fuel Taxes

State fuel taxes should be increased gradually over the next twenty years. The initial increase of \$0.05 per gallon should be enacted in Year 1 or as soon as possible. An additional \$0.04 increase should be imposed in Year 4 and an additional \$0.02 increases should occur in Year 9 and Year 14.

The existing per gallon state gas and use fuel tax in Arizona are \$0.18 and \$0.26, respectively. Based on a survey of state and local fuel tax rates in effect in January 2000, Arizona ranked 40th in the nation in gas taxes and 10th in use fuel taxes. Other states are reviewing their transportation revenue outlook and adjusting fuel taxes accordingly. However, assuming no changes by other states, the initial \$0.05 increase suggested in Year 1 would result in Arizona moving up in the rankings to 19th and 1st for gas and use fuel taxes, respectively. It is noted that in January 2000 Nevada ranked 1st in state and local gas taxes with \$0.33 per gallon and Pennsylvania ranked 1st in state and local diesel taxes with \$0.308 per gallon.

It is most likely that many states will also be making adjustments between Year 4 and Year 14.

Establish a Dedicated Statewide Sales Tax

A dedicated, statewide transportation sales tax surcharge should be phased-in, beginning with a 0.25% surcharge in Year 1, or as soon as possible and an additional 0.5% surcharge is proposed in Year 5. The timing of implementation of the additional 0.5% surcharge should, if possible, coincide with the expiration of the Maricopa County Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) tax during FY 2006.

Establish Dedicated Statewide Development Fees for System Expansion

A dedicated, statewide development fee equal to one per cent of value should be enacted and imposed on all new commercial and residential development in the State. The revenues generated from the fee should be used exclusively for improvements to the state transportation system required to meet the increased transportation demand for moving goods and people associated with the development. This fee is distinct from the locally imposed fee recommended above to deal with specific major developments.

Implementation Requirements:

The legislature should enact the recommended increases in dedicated transportation revenues by legislation or referred to the voters.

Supporting Recommendations

In support of the recommendation to adequately fund Arizona's transportation system, the Task Force also recommends the following financial related system improvements.

Rededicate Flight Property Taxes to the State Aviation Fund

All revenues collected from the state flight property tax should be deposited into the State Aviation Fund. Amounts previously diverted from the Fund should be restored. The rededication of the flight property tax will increase available state revenues for aviation purposes by approximately \$126 million over twenty years and can be used to match substantially greater amounts of available federal monies.

Monies in the Fund should be dedicated to capital improvements to Arizona's airports. Expenditures from the Fund should be dedicated to airports serving regional needs with an emphasis on economic development and vitality. Phoenix Sky Harbor and Tucson International

airports should be limited to their current allocation from the Fund.

Implementation Requirements:

This recommendation, which was also included in the Task Force's Interim Report, was enacted by Legislature in its 2000 regular session.

**Establish State Toll Road Authority
Encourage Public-Private Partnerships
Expand Privatization Authority**

The State should authorize the development and operation of public toll roads. Public toll roads should be considered wherever fiscal analysis indicates opportunity exists to develop facilities that would not otherwise be developed. The public toll authority should facilitate use of private operators and other privatization activities including design-build construction. The authority for public toll roads should include variable priced tolls for Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV) use of existing and future High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, as an example of congestion pricing.

The State Transportation Board and ADOT should pursue all available opportunities to extend available transportation revenues through public-private partnerships and increased privatization wherever appropriate.

The State transportation privatization law should be modified to encourage private investors to maximize project specific, user revenues and to permit ADOT to invest resources, including cash, in private consortium and to allow for the collection of tolls. The privatization process, including the procurement evaluation process, must be flexible enough to encourage and reward efficient innovative financing and public-private partnerships. In addition, ADOT should be authorized to reimburse private parties for proposal development costs related to innovative techniques.

Implementation Requirements:

The existing transportation privatization statutes should be broadened to facilitate publicly owned toll roads.

**Other Funding and Financing
Recommendations**

*Increase Minimum Federal Highway Trust
Fund Distributions*

Arizona, along with several other states, receives the minimum of 90.5% of the amounts collected in Arizona and deposited in the Federal Highway Trust Fund (less federal administrative deductions). Congress should be urged to immediately increase the minimum distribution amount to at least 95%.

*Increase in Highway User Fund
Bonding Capacity*

The statutory limit on Highway User Revenue Bonds should be increased to \$1.3 billion dollars to permit the State Transportation Board to optimize the financing of needed state highway facilities. The State Transportation Board should be authorized to issue bonds secured by any incremental transportation revenues to optimize the timing of the development of needed transportation facilities.

*Establish Automatic Enactment of State Gas
Tax Increase to Offset Federal
Fuel Tax Reductions*

State law should provide that to the extent the federal fuel tax is reduced, the state fuel tax should be automatically increased.

*Restore Local Transportation
Taxing Authority*

The ability of local governments to enact incremental transportation taxes should be clearly established in state statute.

*Authorize State Collection of Tribal Vehicle
Taxes*

ADOT should be authorized to act as a tax collection agent for Indian tribes within the State that choose to impose a tribal vehicle license tax, exclusively for transportation purposes, on tribal members in the same manner, although at

different rates, as the State's vehicle license tax. ADOT would remit the collections to the tribe imposing the tax, net of an appropriate administrative charge.

Prioritized Federal Funding List

Selected state, regional and local transportation projects should be compiled into a single, prioritized list of statewide transportation projects to be submitted for possible federal funding. ADOT should coordinate the

development of the list working in cooperation with transportation entities throughout the State. The State Transportation Board should adopt the prioritized list and forward it to members of Arizona's congressional delegation.

Implementation Requirements:

The appropriate state statutes should be amended to authorize the recommendations described above.

Identify and Establish Transportation System Funding Priorities

Task Force Findings

After reviewing and discussing historic and planned State, regional, local and tribal transportation system expenditures and on the basis of public testimony and comment, the Task Force determined that: 1) basic maintenance of existing facilities is not being funded at necessary levels, leading to even more costly reconstruction once failure occurs; and 2) special emphasis should be placed on proposed transportation system improvements that relieve congestion and move the most people the most often.

On the basis of these findings, the Task Force has developed a series of recommendations regarding the prioritization of available existing and incremental transportation revenues.

Each such agency should periodically develop and report to ADOT the cost to optimally maintain and preserve their existing transportation systems. Any local transportation agency failing to properly maintain and preserve existing assets should be ineligible to receive future transportation revenue distributions. Adequate funding for personnel and systems to perform these duties should be provided from any proposed incremental transportation revenues.

Implementation Requirements:

Full funding of system preservation costs, for all modes and in all areas, for all used and useful assets, by all transportation organizations in Arizona, should be required by state law.

Task Force Recommendations

Major Recommendation Eight:

PRIORITIZE SYSTEM PRESERVATION

The first priority for transportation revenues should be maintenance and preservation of existing, used and useful system assets. System preservation should be funded at the long-term optimal level. All transportation agencies should be mandated, by law, to establish system preservation analysis models similar to the pavement preservation model used by ADOT for the state highway system.

Major Recommendation Nine:

PRIORITIZE CONGESTION RELIEF AND COMMUTER SERVICES

The next highest priority for transportation revenues should be congestion relief, improving commuter services and reducing delays. A specific portion of state collected transportation revenues (and local monies) should be dedicated to address existing and future commuter needs and congestion relief in all areas of the State.

Specific strategies that facilitate commuter travel should be funded and implemented as quickly as possible. Among these specific are: expanded intraregional, intercity express bus service, traffic light synchronization, reversible lanes and the identification and configuration of routes of regional significance to facilitate greater carrying capacity.

Transportation plans should be developed to separate the various modes except at transfer points, to facilitate the free flow of traffic. For example, local buses (excluding express buses) should not be scheduled on major commuter corridors during peak commuter periods. Pedestrians and bicyclists should be separated from roadway traffic and freight rail services should be scheduled to avoid interference with major commuter movements, or overpasses (underpasses) should be constructed.

All transportation agencies should be required to undertake measures to improve operational efficiencies and capacity utilization improvements. Any agency failing to do so within two years should be ineligible to receive future transportation revenue distributions until the agency is in compliance.

In support of the prioritization of congestion relief and commuter services, the Task Force also recommends the following specific solutions to address the existing and future needs throughout the State.

Supporting Recommendations

In support of its congestion relief and commuter relief funding priority, the Task Force also recommends the following:

Employ all Available Techniques and Technologies to Improve Commuter Travel

Transportation corridors that serve substantial commuter needs should be immediately improved using all proven means and methods. These improvements should be the highest priority for all transportation agencies. Among the means that should be immediately implemented are the identification and

development of routes of regional significance, the implementation of comprehensive regional traffic light synchronization systems, expansion of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, expanded commuter express bus services, and expanded van pool services.

Define, Identify and Improve Routes of Regional Significance

ADOT should develop, after consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, and the State Transportation Board should adopt definitions and standards for routes of regional significance. The definitions and standards should apply to all modes of transportation and should recognize the demographic and geographic differences in the various regions of the State.

ADOT should identify, after consultation with local, regional and tribal transportation agencies, and the State Transportation Board should confirm the identification of routes of regional significance. Such routes should either be the responsibility of regional transportation districts or should be considered for inclusion in the state system. Subject to available funding, any local transportation agency failing to meet the adopted standards and methodologies within five years of adoption or subsequently failing to maintain the standards should be ineligible to receive any transportation revenue distributions, until such time as it is in compliance.

A regional Transportation Improvement Plan should not be moved forward without the identification of routes of regional significance and the scheduled implementation of the required standards.

Adaptive Traffic Light Synchronization

Local transportation agencies should be mandated by state law to assist in the development of and implement coordinated, adaptive, regional traffic light synchronization using all available technology.

Enhance Regional Capacity Utilization

A portion of any incremental transportation revenues should be deposited into a separate fund dedicated to implementing regional strategies and programs in the largest urban

areas, to improve commuter traffic flows and increase utilization of existing system assets. The separate fund should initially be funded at \$50 million to expedite required capital expenditure and subsequently as a fixed dollar amount or percentage of the new revenues. Eligible projects for the fund would include regional traffic light synchronization, regional traffic management systems, expanded *smart corridor* systems on regional routes, transit delay notification systems and other programs targeted at reducing commuter congestion and delays.

A portion of any incremental transportation revenues allocated to ADOT should be dedicated to the expedited implementation of capacity utilization enhancement programs on the state highway system. The expedited implementation of these programs should be a condition of continued receipt of future transportation revenue distributions.

Develop Urban Area HOV Lanes and HOT Lanes

The system of HOV lanes should be completed and connected in the major urban areas to facilitate movement of commuters. All future urban highway expansion projects should incorporate HOV lanes to the greatest extent practicable.

Fund Grade Separated Rail Crossings

The State should establish a program to fund grade separated railroad intersections at major urban roadways. The program should focus on primary commuter routes and routes of regional significance and locations with safety concerns.

A dedicated funding source, from a portion of any incremental transportation revenues, should be established for the program. The program could be operated through a rail account under the Highway Extension and Expansion Loan Program (HELP). The amount of money in this account at any one time should be capped.

ADOT, in consultation with the Arizona Corporation Commission, municipalities, counties and the rail industry should identify critical rail crossings that would be eligible for assistance from HELP.

Whether the improvement involves new grade crossing technologies or infrastructure or establishing grade separation, the project should require a match from rail industry and a local or regional match. Federal funding, if available, could be used to meet match requirements (e.g. Surface Transportation Program or Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality monies).

The State Transportation Board, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, should develop criteria for prioritizing rail-crossing projects in a 20-year plan.

Implementation Requirements:

State law should require all transportation agencies to prioritize transportation system improvements that mitigate congestion and facilitate commuter travel described above.

Major Recommendation Ten:

IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATE AND OBVIOUS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

There are a substantial number of immediate and obvious improvements to the State's transportation system that can and should be immediately implemented. These cost-effective, transportation system improvements could be rapidly implemented and would greatly enhance mobility and relieve congestion in growing urban areas, especially in the two large metropolitan areas, although some have statewide applicability. The Task Force believes the following major strategies should be implemented as soon as possible:

- regional traffic light synchronization;
- expanded use of express bus service and vanpools;
- more bus pullouts on major arterial streets;
- a High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane pilot project;
- improved incident management strategies; and.
- enhanced traffic management systems

Regional Traffic Light Synchronization

Local transportation agencies should be mandated by state law to implement coordinated, regional traffic light synchronization using all available technology. Linking all traffic lights into regional traffic operations centers as a part of an improved traffic management system can facilitate traffic movement. Restriction or elimination of irregularly spaced traffic lights on key streets, especially during peak commuting times can also facilitate traffic movement.

Expanded Express Bus Service Van Pooling

Expanded express bus service van facilitates commuter travel and reduces congestion, thereby effectively increasing the capacity of the existing transportation system. Expanded van pooling and additional bus pullouts, especially on major streets, can effectively increase the capacity of the existing roadway system.

Additionally, real-time schedule information to mass transit users can encourage system use and reduce congestion.

Incident Management

Traffic incidents that contribute to congestion and delays could be significantly mitigated through the installation of more traffic cameras to provide more road condition and congestion information. The State should adopt roadway incident management policies that emphasize

rapid clearing of traffic lanes and investigative techniques that minimize interference with the free flow of traffic.

Freeway service patrols, especially if implemented in the Tucson area in a manner similar to the existing patrols in the Phoenix area, could reduce freeway traffic delays due to disabled vehicles.

HOT Lane Pilot Project

The use of existing and future high occupancy vehicle lanes by single occupant vehicle paying a toll should be rigorously examined. A pilot project should be immediately initiated in the metropolitan Phoenix area using existing HOV lanes. If it is determined, using performance-based methods, that such a system would improve overall system performance it should be implemented system wide. Variable priced tolls should be considered as a means to optimize utilization.

Implementation Requirements:

Full funding of these immediate and obvious strategies by transportation organizations throughout Arizona, should be required by state law.